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### **Biden takes Deed to Wilmington drug haven**

**Wilmington, DE** – Attorney General Beau Biden announced today that for the first time the Delaware Department of Justice has obtained the Deed to a property under Delaware’s Nuisance Abatement Act. At the Department’s request a Superior Court Judge banned the owner from the property and ordered him to pay a penalty equal to the value of the home or to turn the property over to the State.

“We have taken bold and decisive action to make this community safer,” said Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III at a press conference in front of the property at 1014 Rodman Road in Wilmington’s Canby Park neighborhood. “By holding this property owner accountable to the law we’re making it clear that the Delaware Department of Justice is using the full measures at our disposal to fight criminal activity that threatens our neighborhoods.”

At a trial on Tuesday, September 23 the Department of Justice proved that the property has been the sight of constant drug traffic, prostitution activity, and that weapons have often been found on the premises. At one point, neighborhood residents were forced to evacuate after a grenade was discovered in the row house. Judge Peggy Ableman declared the property the site of drug and vice crime and issued a permanent abatement order banning the owner, William J. Murphy, from the property. The order also requires him to pay a civil penalty equal to the market value of the property and to pay court costs. In lieu of paying the monetary penalties, Murphy was permitted to sign the Deed of the property over to the State.

In August, 2007 Attorney General Biden launched a statewide effort to combat crime in Delaware under the state’s Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act. Under the Nuisance Abatement Act, enforcement actions can take a variety of forms, including closure of a property.

The Delaware Department of Justice identifies nuisance properties up and down Delaware through its own investigations and cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic associations, and neighborhood residents. Since August, 2007, the Department has issued more than 35 written notices to property owners in all three counties. These notices state that a nuisance exists on the property and give owners the choice of voluntarily cooperating to clean up the illegal activity, or defending themselves in court and being forced to clean up the crime by court order.

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